

*An Informal History*  
*Of*  
St. Clement's  
Episcopal Church

Vaiden, Mississippi

1876 – 1976

*by*

Emily Barksdale Humphrey

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**PREFACE**

“There be some who have left a name behind them and whose remembrance is sweet. And there be some who have no memorial. But their righteousness has not been forgotten and their glory shall not be blotted out.” Eccl. 44

**ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN HIS HOUSE**

This is a story which for 100 years has stood looking eastward over the green trees of Vaiden, the Big Black River, and the eternal sunrise.

It is a house that belongs to the Holy Trinity and to the many dozens of His human children whose feet have crossed its threshold with the past century, bringing their joys, griefs, fears, hopes and frustrations, and laying them down in the quiet peace of His sanctuary.

Some places seem to have a memory and living spirit. We do well to keep such places holy and to seek what they have to tell us.

Inescapably it is also the story of an era that has passed and of another era beginning. It is in part the story of Vaiden and of those sturdy old homes in winter with crackling fires and comfortable chairs, broad porches in summer and picket fences, winding walks and armies of squirrels and robins.

It is all part of that 100 years of history which is the heritage of the Church of St. Clement's. In order that it may not be lost it must be written down. Emily Barksdale Humphrey has happily recorded many interesting facts about our church as only one can do who has deep affection, and as one who attended the church as a child and was there baptized and confirmed.

Clarence A. Pierce, Jr.  
May, 1974

## MINISTERS

Vaiden St. Clement's Church

1. Alexander F. Samuels 1868
2. Benjamin Halstead 1869-72
3. Stephen H. Green 1873-76
4. Van Winder Shields 1876
5. James A. Matthews 1877-78
6. William W. DeHart 1879-80
7. Oliver Wilson 1880-81
8. William P. Browne 1882-85
9. Henry A. Skinner 1886-87
10. James M. Magruder 1888-89
11. William H. Phillips 1889-90
12. James B. Fitzpatrick 1890-1901
13. E. S. Gunn 1902-08; 1916-19
14. David T. Johnson 1908-11
15. Malcolm W. Lockhart 1912-13
16. Edward McCrady 1914-15
17. E. A. DeMiller 1915-16
18. George V. Harris 1920-22
19. John B. Caughey 1923-28
20. John T. Foster 1928-29
21. Jones S. Hamilton 1929-34
22. J. Ord Cresap 1934-35
23. Winfred P. Jones 1935-40
24. Charles Liles 1940-51
25. Michael T. Engle 1954-55
26. Roy C. Bascom 1955-58
27. Wofford K. Smith 1958-60
28. Reynolds S. Cheney, II 1961-63
29. M. L. Agnew 1967-68
30. Michael Bell 1967-68
31. Sam Monk 1972 -

*O God, whom year by year we praise for the dedication of this church; Hear, we beseech thee, the prayers of thy people, and grant that whosoever shall worship before thee in this place, may obtain thy merciful aid and protection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

-- Book of Common Prayer --

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I

**THE FOUNDING OF ST. CLEMENT'S**

Early registers of St. Clement's Episcopal Church have been lost or misplaced. Only one, dating from 1920 is extant. Therefore, the bones of this story have been dug from the *Journals* of the Bishops of Mississippi and other early diocesan records, to be fleshed by memory, and, occasionally, imagination. And if at times this seems to be the story of a family and a town as well, it is because the three are inextricable, one from the other.

St. Clement, whose name means *merciful*, was one of the apostolic fathers. In the first century he was a chief personality in the Christian community of Rome, and was regarded as a follower of St. Peter. In the church calendar, he is commemorated every November 23. His name is given also to the beautiful and historic Anglican chapel of the Royal Air Force, and this writer experienced a momentary pang of homesickness when "St. Clement's" was pointed out to her in London, England.

Varying dates have been ascribed to the first formal organization of Episcopalians in Vaiden. Some late, annual parochial reports show 1837, no doubt because that was the year Dr. Cowles Mead Vaiden came to Mississippi from Virginia. Nothing, however, was found to support that supposition.

On December 9, 1838, the Reverend Leonidas Polk, West Point graduate and later founder of the University of the South (affectionately known as "Sewanee") and "Bishop-Militant" to the Confederacy, was elected Missionary Bishop to the Southwest. The son of Sarah (Hawkins) and William Polk of Raleigh, North Carolina, he was, interestingly, a first cousin of Major Frank Hawkins of Winona, father of Rhesa Read Hawkins, a founder of St. Clement's.

Bishop Polk's far-flung missionary diocese extended into newly-created Indian Territory, covered the Republic of Texas and the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. His attention to Mississippi, therefore, was limited largely to the Natchez District where the Church had gained a foothold and was growing.

On October 6, 1841, Bishop Polk was elected Bishop of Louisiana alone. Shortly before, in a letter of January 18, 1841, to his mother, quoted in *General Leonidas Polk C. S. A., The Fighting Bishop* by Joseph H. Parks, he says of Louisiana: "She has not, as far as I know, a single (Episcopal) church west of the Mississippi, and I find few or no Presbyterians and only now and then a wandering Methodist." So it is understandable why he did not visit north-central Mississippi during the slow Indian exodus that followed the treaties of Dancing Rabbit (1830) and Pontotoc Creek (1832).

Next in succession was William Mercer Green. Born May 2, 1798, in Wilmington, North Carolina, he was the son of a wealthy rice planter. From a position as Chaplain and Professor of Belles Lettres at the University of North Carolina, he was elected the first Bishop of Mississippi in 1849, and consecrated February 24, 1850 in St. Andrew's Church, Jackson. (St. Andrew's Church in 1966 was made the Cathedral Church of the Diocese.)

Upon Bishop Green fell the heavy burden of organizing and holding together the fledgling churches of the diocese, of ministering to his people before, during, and after the desperate years of the Civil War. He fulfilled his mission well, for he was deeply loved and long remembered. He was spoken of often down through the years, and always with reverence and devotion. It is said that during Jenny Lind's visit to Natchez, upon going out one day, she came face to face with Bishop Green and was overwhelmed by his presence. Kneeling before him in the street, she asked his blessing, which he gladly gave her.

Among Barksdale family papers there is a picture of him in his Episcopal robes, his face serene, his small, old-fashioned spectacles reposing on the top of his head, his long, white hair reaching to his shoulders. This picture is inscribed: "To Miss Lizzie V. Hawkins, with the love and blessing of her Bishop, W. M. Green, Vaiden, Mississippi, January 20, 1880."

The next date ascribed in late records to the organization of Episcopalians in Vaiden is 1859. That might seem a more logical choice, as demonstrated by a newspaper notice placed in the *Mississippian State Gazette* of Jackson, issued March 2, 1859. It reads in part:

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"The Mississippi Central Railroad  
Lots for Sale  
At Vaiden Depot, one mile North-East  
of Shongalo, Carroll County

*I will offer for sale at the Depot ground, on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April next, such lots as may be selected for business or residence. This is regarded as a healthy point, is nearly midway between New Orleans and Cairo, is well situated for a town, surrounded by an exemplary community, with a rich and productive country, a thrifty and industrious population tributary to it. In evidence of its morality, steps have been taken to erect three churches for worship."*

This is dated at Shongalo, "March 1, 59" and is signed by L. W. Herring, brother-in-law of Dr. Vaiden and great-great-grandson of John Herring who in 1746 was appointed a vestryman of the parish of St. Patrick's in Johnston County, North Carolina.

However, troubled times and the approaching Civil War would have suspended any budding plans for a closer association, and Louis Whitfield Herring, pioneer real estate broker, planter, Episcopalian, and prospective founder died during the war, on January 31, 1863.

At this time another prospective founder of St. Clement's was revealing that spiritual quality and compassion which were to characterize his life forever afterward.

Rhesa Read Hawkins at age sixteen became a soldier of the Confederacy, serving in the Army of Northern Virginia. Like other young Southerners of gentility and means, he was accompanied to war by his bodily servant, Elbert. From a camp near Ashland, Virginia, on April 19, 1862, he wrote to inform his parents, Major and Mrs. Frank Hawkins of Carroll County, "of the death of Elbert, who died last night twenty minutes after eleven o'clock and was buried this morning at ten o'clock.

"His disease, the doctor said, was Typhoid Bronchitis. He was taken sick the eleventh and I carried him to a private house near camp, and after he began to get worse, which was last Monday evening, I went there and stayed day and night, as our Regt. Left that day, and the Capt. let me stay with him.

"I sat up every night, and waited on him just the same as if he was my brother. He was delirious from Tuesday twelve o'clock until he died. Before he became senseless I asked him if he was willing to die. He said he was and prayed a good deal. I read my Bible to him and he seemed very happy. If I was to leave home fifty times I would never carry anybody else.

"After Dr. Ward left, I sent for a doctor down town. The doctor's bill and what it cost me at the house (at) which he stayed was sixteen (16) dollars. I have forty (\$40) dollars left, which is a plenty.

“There are some sick men left behind with me and we expect to leave here just as soon as we can get off, probably tomorrow morning to join the regiment. . .as I am tired from sitting up so much I will close. . . .”

In 1865, Bishop Green attended the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This convention is memorable for its early restoration of the southern dioceses to their ante-bellum status in the church. With peace restored, religious activities could return to normal. Plans for a church at Vaiden were resumed.

The first written reference to the future church was found in an entry in Bishop Green’s *Journal* under the date of Thursday, April 15, 1869. He wrote: “Assisted by the Rev. Mr. Halstead I preached to a large congregation at Vaiden, on the Central Road, and baptized one infant. Mr. Halstead has lately commenced officiating at this place once a month, and hopes to establish a permanent parish. One wealthy and generous friend has offered one thousand dollars towards the erection of a church. At night I confirmed one person in private, at the house of a friend nine miles from Vaiden.”

We long to know who the infant was, and who the first confirmed, but we do know the Rev. Mr. Halstead was the rector of Calvary Church at nearby Lexington, and the “wealthy and generous friend,” the Bishop later reveals, was Dr. Vaiden. From this time on, Bishop Green records regular visits to this congregation. He

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gives the number but not the names of those baptized and confirmed.

The following year, on Wednesday, November 16, 1870, Bishop Green returned. “I preached at Vaiden,” he wrote, “and the next day preached again, and administered the Holy Communion. In the evening I baptized in private one adult and one infant.”

This service undoubtedly was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins. She was born Elizabeth Vaiden Herring; and daughter of Louis Whitfield Herring and his wife, Emily Lafayette Vaiden. The infant referred to was the Hawkins’ first son, Louis Herring, whose obituary forty-seven years later gave this date as that of his baptism. Reminiscences by older generations of the Hawkins family described as an established Vaiden custom the holding of early Episcopal services such as these in the Hawkins’ parlor.

On March 22, 1872, Bishop Green noted: “I was to have preached at Vaiden, but was hindered by an unceasing and heavy fall of rain. This did not prevent me, however, from baptizing two adults and confirming four in private.” Public preaching services in those early years were held wherever a roof could be borrowed or one was offered, and continued that way in some towns for many years to come. Described in the Bishop’s *Journal* as welcome meeting places as he traveled over the state were schools, Masonic halls, courthouses, and the like. For the use of church buildings of other denominations he was especially grateful. All were generous in that respect, and on numerous occasions those friends joined as a body with the Episcopalians in their services. The addition, then, of more churches was greatly needed.

On March 17, 1875, the Bishop wrote: “I preached at Vaiden, baptizing one infant. An eligible lot and the sum of one thousand dollars have been offered by a liberal friend (Dr. C.M. Vaiden) towards the erection of a church.”

Dr. Vaiden did give that amount – and probably more – toward the building. He did not give the lot, however, which Carroll County records show, was deeded to the church as a gift from his sister, Mrs. Emily Vaiden Herring. Their mother, Sallie Cowles Vaiden, was a first cousin of Cowles Mead who had been appointed by President Thomas Jefferson as Secretary of the Mississippi Territory, and who later, as Acting Governor, was responsible for the capture of Aaron Burr.

Dr. Vaiden had acquired vast land holdings, all combined in the formation of a beautiful and prosperous plantation, "Prairie Mont." He commissioned the New Orleans architect, James Harris, who designed Greenwood Leflore's "Malmaison," to build for him a similar mansion. Greek Revival in style, with soaring white columns and wrought iron balconies, its third story was an observatory and plantation office. Its crystal chandeliers, marble mantels, frescoed walls and rich furnishings were reflected in the beautiful gold-leafed pier mirrors, imported from France, that adorned the twin parlors.

Dr. Allen Cabaniss in his history, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years*, says: "To provide still further for poorer youth to attend the University, Dr. Cowles M. Vaiden, a Trustee, began the practice in 1877 of advancing money to indigent students on their personal notes. He continued to do so until his death in 1880. The extent of his generosity is suggested by the fact that at one period there were a hundred 'Vaiden Beneficiaries' enrolled at the school." [Ed. Note: As found in the following: N. C. Hathorn, "A Financial History of the University of Mississippi from its Endowment in 1819 to 1900" (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1938), 91.

Thinking to insure continuance and expansion of the program, Dr. Vaiden, in his will, left \$50,000 to the University, with the proviso that the state match his bequest. This stipulation the Legislature failed to meet, and in the years since, perhaps many a Mississipian has been deprived of an education by that long-ago body of lawmakers.

It is easy to see that "St. Chrysostom's" (the name first given the new mission then being organized at Vaiden) was blessed in having the personal interest and generous support of such a wealthy and good man, for the years 1872 to 1878 were depression years. The erection of the church within that period called for sacrifice on the part of the congregation, for not until 1878 did the United States begin to recover from the long stagnation of business and the accompanying miseries of unemployment and want.

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## II

### BUILDING THE CHURCH

The entry in Bishop Green's *Journal* for November 6, 1876, reads: "I preached in Vaiden at 11 a.m. Here, also, as at Winona, I found a newly erected church, substantially built, and of approved style and proportions. One-half of its cost. . . was the gift of a friend well-known for his liberality and public spirit (Dr. C.M. Vaiden). Six persons were confirmed; being the first fruits of the labors of the Rev. Mr. Shields, who officiated at this place and Winona since our last Council; and has lately added Carrollton to his charge."

The church was built out of brick. Its windows appear today, in large part, as they did then – painted as though mullioned. The ceiling above the chancel was originally painted a deep blue, scattered over with gold stars in representation of the firmament. Oak trees were planted to shield it from the heat of the summer and protect it from the blasts of winter. These were cut down some years ago, but the same English box bushes that flourished then flourish today in front of the church. These, according to Mrs. John Woodson Barksdale, Sr., were planted by her grandmother, Emily Vaiden Herring. And whether by design or no, the church was located at the center of a Y, standing equidistant between the home of the Senior Warden, Rhesa Read Hawkings, and the home of the Junior Warden, S.E. McConnico. They passed it daily as they went to and fro on business; and upon the porches of their large, white houses, they could turn for a last glimpse of it at a day's end and see that all was well.

But in addition to financial stress, these early years were also years of sorrow. The Senior Warden, in his diary on September 11, 1878, wrote: “7 p.m. Cool and dry. Now sitting by a winter fire with windows down. Yellow fever bad. No Abatement.”

Later, in his annual address to Council, the Bishop said: “Among the events that have tried our souls is a pestilence of fatal, widespread, and long-continued malignity, sparing neither sex nor condition and aiming its most destructive shafts at the members and ministers of our diocese (causing) the deaths of three of our esteemed clergy and three of our most promising candidates for the ministry. . .I would fain spare your feelings as well as my own, by any attempted description of the ravages of that fearful disease. It took from me a son who was the pride of my heart and who was rising rapidly to fill a larger place in the Church. Of his merits, whatever they may have been, I leave others to speak. To a father, it may be allowed to say, with thankfulness amid his tears, that (his son) lay not down on his own dying bed until he had exhausted his strength in a day and night attendance on the dying and the dead of all to whom he could render any service. “It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good,”” This son, the Rev. Duncan Cameron Green, was the father of William Mercer Green II, who became the third Bishop of Mississippi.

References to the Vaiden mission during these trying years continued to call it “St. Chrysostom’s,” Various members of the congregation were designated as delegates to Diocesan Councils, and Jefferson Davis went as a delegate from the Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi, in 1878. In that year, the rector of St. Clement’s was the Rev. J.A. Mathews. He was followed in 1881 by the Rev. Oliver Wilson. The statistical report of that year again listed Rhesa Read Hawkins as Senior Warden, and S.E. McConnico as Junior Warden. The number of families was given as 4, with 10 communicants, 1 Sunday school teacher (male) and 6 pupils. Amounts assessed were \$300 to the rector’s salary and \$16 to the Bishop’s salary, and the value of the church was estimated as \$2,000. In spite of the financial depression, in spite of the yellow fever epidemics, St. Chrysostom’s survived. In 1880, it lost a powerful friend in the death (by pneumonia) of Dr. Vaiden, but it never faltered in its intent.

By 1881 all of its financial obligations had been met. Being free of debt, it was now eligible for consecration. The original *Instrument of Donation and Request for Acceptance and Solemn Consecration* was found in church papers deposited for

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safe keeping with the historiographer of the diocese. Hand-written by Rhesa Read Hawkins, Senior Warden, it reads:

*“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

*“We, the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church having, by the good providence of God, been enabled to erect this house of worship to the glory of His Name and for the advancement of His Church, do hereby respectfully request the Right Reverend William Mercer Green D.D., L.L.D., to take the same under his protection and jurisdiction and solemnly dedicate it to the worship of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, setting it apart forever from all profane and unhallowed uses and dedicating it to the worship of Almighty God, to the reading and preaching of His Holy Word, and to the administration of His Holy Sacraments, and to the right performance of the rites, ceremonies, and ordinances of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States, as enjoined by the Rubrics and Canons of the same, Vaiden, Carroll County, State of Mississippi, Second Sunday in Advent, the fourth day of December, A.D., One thousand, Eight Hundred and Eighty One.*

(S) R.R. Hawkins  
(S) S.E. McConnico

(S) M.H. McConnico  
(S) E.L. Herring  
(S) Mrs. C.M. Vaiden  
(S) L.V. Hawkins  
(S) M.Y. Vick”

Found also, in the same depository, was the original *Statement of Consecration*. It, too, was carefully written, though by an unknown hand, and reads:

*“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

*“Whereas a number of the friends and Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this place and neighborhood moved by the Good Spirit of God and a love of His Worship have erected the building in which we are now assembled for the Glory of His Name and the edification of His Church and have requested me to take the same into my jurisdiction and control and to Consecrate it to the holy purposes for which it was designed.*

*“Therefore*

*Be it known that in compliance with the said request I, William Mercer Green, D.D., L.L.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, do hereby receive the said building under the jurisdiction and control of myself and my successors in office and do hereby separate it forever from all common and unhallowed uses and dedicate and consecrate it to the holy purposes of celebrating the worship of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the reading and preaching of his Holy Word, the administration of the Holy Sacraments, and the performance of all the rites, ceremonies, and ordinances of that branch of Christ’s Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church known by the name of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. In testimony whereof I, this Fourth Day of December in the Year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and eighty one in the town of Vaiden and county of Carroll, affix my name and the seal of the Diocese of Mississippi.”*

This document was signed by William Mercer Green, and still affixed thereon in red wax is the seal.

Would not the day of donation and consecration have been a happy one – replete with satisfaction and a quiet rejoicing?

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### III

## CONSOLIDATION AND GROWTH

Bishop Green, now eighty-four years of age, had been in the office over thirty-two years. Steps were taken to lighten the burden growing daily heavier for him. On November 28, 1882, a special council convened at St. Andrew’s Church, Jackson. There the Reverend Hugh Miller Thompson, brilliant Rector of Trinity Church, New Orleans, was elected “Assistant Bishop of Mississippi.”

The following year St. Clement’s parochial report listed the Reverend W.P. Browne as its rector. The two wardens remained unchanged, but the number of families had increased to 10 and the “whole number of souls” to 37.

The report continued:

Baptisms		2
Confirmations		2
Admissions		2
Marriages		1
Public Services – Sundays		16
Holy Communion – Public		4
Sunday Schools		
Teachers	(Male)	1
	(Female)	3
Other Officers		1
Scholars		20
	(Male)	10
	(Female)	10

Total contributions for the year amounted to \$1,539.25. St. Clement's had reached the point where it felt it could stand alone – could move up from its mission status and assume the duties and financial responsibilities of a parish. A petition to that effect was presented to the Church Council that met in Grace Church, Canton, April 11 and 12, 1883. St. Clement's delegates to that body were Rhesa R. Hawkins and W.W. Chalmers. Alternates were J.E. Talbot (*sic*) and N.J. Vick. There was some question regarding "irregular preparation of the petition" (caused, perhaps, by the change in name?) but the record continues: "the Rev. William Munford, in behalf of the Committee on Credentials of Lay Delegates reported as having examined and found in order the credentials of the delegates from the Church of the Nativity, Greenwood, and St. Clement's, Vaiden. . .Mr. R.R. Hawkins of Vaiden appeared and took the seat as the delegate from his parish." The committee recommended "the Parish of St. Clement of Vaiden be, and the same is hereby admitted into union with the Councils of this Diocese."

Major Frank Hawkins, long the Senior Warden of Immanuel, Winona, and father of Rhesa R. Hawkins, was also present as a delegate, from his church.

Late in the year, on December 3, Bishop Thompson commented: "Accompanied by the Rev. W.P. Browne I preached in St. Clement's Church, Vaiden, and confirmed one person. I preached again in the evening, when one other candidate was confirmed. This parish, together with that of Winona, will constitute the principal field of Mr. Browne's labors."

On February 12, 1884: "Licensed William M. Chalmers to ast as Lay Reader for the Parish of St. Clement's, in Vaiden."

Bishop William Mercer Green, at age eighty-nine, died at Sewanee on February 2, 1887. St. Clement's altar cross stands today as a memorial given in gratitude for him, the revered guide and mentor of its early days.

St. Clement's rector in 1888 was the Rev. J.M. Magruder; Louis H. Hawkins, clerk and treasurer. The wardens were unchanged. Indeed, those two devoted servants of the church were kept in these key positions as long as they lived. Rhesa Read Hawkins was Senior Warden until the day of his death in 1918. He was succeeded in that office by the Junior Warden, S.E. McConnico, Sr., who ably filled it until he, too, died, in 1928.

In 1890, the rector was the Rev. W.H. Phillips. He was followed in 1891 by the much beloved Dr. J.B. Fitzpatrick, who continued to serve for the remaining ten years of his life. The large Bible still in use in the chancel bears a written statement that it was used for the first time by Dr. Fitzpatrick on July 26, 1896.

The death of Major Frank Hawkins at Winona (home parish of the Hawkins family of Mississippi) on September 19, 1896, brought sorrow not only to his own parish but also to St. Clement's – the sister parish with which it had such close ties – and to the diocese he had served so long and well. In addressing the Council that met in May, 1897, Bishop Thompson, out of the love he bore Major Hawkins, spared neither zeal nor flowery rhetoric in lamenting the loss of that friend and ally:

“. . . I turn to some examples which we name with reverence and love tonight – Our loss! Yes, but their exceeding gain. (A) loss which your Bishop feels, and while he lives must feel, is of that stalwart gentleman and generous Churchman, Major Frank Hawkins of Winona, the abundant and genial hospitalities of whose typical home so many of the clergy have enjoyed, and which was a home of rest to the Bishop.

“In Major Frank Hawkins one discerned a striking example of what the physiologists call ‘the purest of type.’

“He was in direct descent from that Sir John Hawkins, Port Admiral of Plymouth (England), who was playing bowles on Plymouth Hoe with his cousin, Sir Francis Drake, when the Scotch fishing smack brought the news of the Armada entering the Channel. ‘Finish the game, Franky,’ said Jack, ‘we’ll have plenty of time to beat the Spainiard after.’

“They found a new Devonshire across the sea with many of their kindred, one branch of brave Jack’s family, and called it Granville County, after that Sir Richard Granville who fought in the little *Revenge* ‘for a day and a night,’ a whole Spanish fleet off the Azores. Sir Richard (was) another cousin of Hawkins, and in the New Land the old blood showed itself, and the Hawkinses of North Carolina distinguished themselves in all positions for the downright honesty, manfulness and square dealing, which marked the great Port Admiral of Plymouth, who built his ships so true, and did his admiral’s work so well, that his cousin Drake’s ship went round the world, captured a dozen Spanish-American ships, and sailed after two years into Plymouth Harbor loaded with 50,000,000 of treasure, and not a plank started nor a rope rotten.

“I used to think I could still see in my friend, the Mississippi planter, the cheery face, the manly frankness, the genial, brave good humor, and the honest faith in men and God, that made the grand old Admiral, his ancestor, one of the world’s heroes, ‘in the spacious days of the Great Elizabeth.’”

Three years later, when Bishop Thompson wrote in his *Journal*, “Vaiden, April 18, 1900. Celebrated a marriage.” He was referring to the wedding of Emily Mead Hawkins (daughter of the Senior Warden) and Dr. John Woodson Barksdale. It was a large, formal evening wedding, the invitations including cards for the reception that followed at the home of the bride’s parents. Wax orange blossoms; a beautiful, white, silk-organandie wedding gown; a white lace fan; and tiny, white satin slippers – size 2! – still serve as mementos of that lovely occasion.

In his address to the Council of 1902, Bishop Thompson referred to another death: “It was but the other day we committed to the earth, in Winona, the body of another priest, who died with his armor on, the Rev. J.B. Fitzpatrick, who came to us an elderly man, but who gave ten years of most fruitful and appreciated service. Eight of his fellow presbyters stood about his grave and it was my own sad satisfaction to be present and commit his body to the dust.”

Bishop Thompson in this same address continued: “Our church is a Body with ancient law and ancient precedent. The reverent, serious-minded lawyer takes to it naturally. We are a part of the world’s long history, a great part of its gray, old story, in our own race for the ascertaining and settling of human rights. The Church is no sect of yesterday, no hastily gathered expression of folk scared about the salvation of their poor little souls. It has a grip on and is a great part of the record of human toil and human pain for the uplifting of men and the deliverance of God’s world from evil. It was, and it is always, a Republic, no King but Christ. An Archbishop

of Canterbury wrote Magna Charta. Centuries after (it was) a Church clergyman (who) offered the first prayer in the Congress of the United States, built

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on that same Magna Charta as the foundation of an Englishman's rights, the world over, and to the end of time. Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, the 'Demosthenes of the Revolution', the Lees, the 'signers' in great majority, were Churchmen. Another Lee, the grandest of them all, and Jefferson Davis were ours. But the lawyers, from Marshall and Jay, down to our present bench, Melville Fuller presiding, were ours on the bench of the most august Court of Law in Christendom.

"And another name I must put on record here. . . Captain John Hawkins. I confirmed him in his sick room before his death in his own home on his own estate at Swan Lake. He died at a good old age, being a long-lived race (the uncle of Rhesa Read Hawkins of Vaiden) and the brother of Major Frank Hawkins of Winona, now 'gone before' in charity with all the world and in the peace of God. He regretted his long postponement of confirmation, and in childlike simplicity he said he wished to be confirmed and receive communion that he might go to his own people. Gentlemen, blood will tell and family piety will tell. And when the evening comes, it brings the children home."

Emily Vaiden Herring, who was one of the charter members of the congregation (and who always covered her head with a fresh, white handkerchief before saying her prayers in private), died on April 23, 1901. Lone bedridden with arthritis, her devotion to the Church continued in spite of her suffering. Her crippled fingers guided the needle that fashioned for Dr. Fitzpatrick a surplice so beautiful – its seams hardly visible, that Mrs. Barksdale, her granddaughter, said he described it as resembling "the seamless garment." As he had requested, Dr. Fitzpatrick was robed in that surplice as part of his burial vestments.

Shortly afterward, Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson also died. He, too, left a stronger diocese that remembered him with love and gratitude for the lasting benefits he had wrought in his twenty years as Bishop.

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#### IV

### THE HALCYON YEARS

Following Dr. Fitzpatrick's ministry, the Rev. E. Stirling Gunn became the rector of St. Clement's in 1902. A year later his youngest son and last child, George Purnell, was born in the rectory at Winona. This son followed his father into the ministry and rose in the Church to become Bishop of Southern Virginia. In this capacity, he officiated at the funeral of General Douglas MacArthur. Bishop Gunn died in 1973.

On September 29, 1903, in St. Andrew's Church, Jackson, the Rev. Theodore DuBose Bratton, a native of South Carolina, was consecrated the Third Bishop of Mississippi. His assumption of office ushered in a long period of harmonious progress. His gentle spirit combined with total dedication called forth the best in his people, and the diocese responded to his magnetism with love.

He described his first visit to St. Clement's on November 15, 1903: "In the afternoon (from Winona) Mr. Gunn and I drove to Vaiden, 12 miles distant, and at 7 p.m., at Evening Prayer, I preached and confirmed a class of six, and addressed them." The next day, he continues, "at the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins, I had the pleasure of meeting many of our own flock and of the citizens of Vaiden, among them the Pastors of the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations. Mr. Gunn and I drove back to Winona, where a like reception at Mr. Purnell's was given us this afternoon."

This unhurried journey, made not in the smoky confines of a train but by horse and buggy, surely was the choice of two congenial clerics, undertaken beneath deep blue skies and on soft, hazy days of a Mississippi Indian Summer.

In Bishop Bratton's first message to the Church Council (1904) he says regarding "Sewanee": "It is gratifying to see from the last catalog that in point of number of students, Mississippi stands third among the supporters of the University."

Sent from St. Clement's to that renowned institution were both sons of the Senior Warden: Louis Herring Hawkins and John Davis Hawkins. They were followed a generation later by Frank Louis Hawkins. Frank Hawkins of Atlanta, Georgia, the brother of Rhesa Read Hawkins, was the oldest living alumnus of "Sewanee" when he died in 1954 at the age of 98.

In that same, first address to the Council, the new Bishop said: "I will not be satisfied until we have diocesan institutions for both sexes. . . I do not know as yet what the sentiment of the Diocese is with reference to such institutions but this knowledge will come as I find the time to place the subject more fully before my brethren."

His enthusiasm won support, and in 1908 All Saints' College, Vicksburg, was incorporated. St. Clement's responded to an appeal for funds with a contribution of \$563.25. Out of eighty-three parishes in the diocese contributing, St. Clement's stood fifteenth – well ahead of many much larger and wealthier congregations. Winona stood first. Four who were sent from St. Clement's to All Saints' for their college preparatory work were Janie (Hawkins) Grantham; Elizabeth (Barksdale) Lawson; Emily (Barksdale) Humphrey; and Virginia (Hawkins) Bellenger. Upon her death, Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins remembered "Sewanee" and All Saints' in her will.

In 1908, the Rev. David T. Johnson came as rector to St. Clement's. In 1909 he officiated at the beautiful evening wedding of Miss Alice Talbert and Mr. Simon E. Turner. A picture of the interior of the church, lavishly decorated for that happy occasion, shows St. Clement's as it was before remodeling took place, two years later.

Upon completion of that program, Bishop Bratton, on his next visit wrote: "November 9, 1911. St. Clement's, Vaiden. Assisted by Mr. Johnson, I preached and celebrated the Holy Communion. . . The church has a new tower and is completely and permanently renovated within, making it one of the very prettiest model structures in the diocese."

Exclusive of gifts, \$827.60 was expended on this program, and in the next parochial report the listed value of the church was doubled, to \$4000.

The interior was re-painted white. The chancel area was beautiful with native

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curly pine paneling, the gift of Louis W. Herring, Jr. The entranceway was changed to lead through a new brick tower containing a belfry. The bronze bell therein was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins. Three memorial windows, one depicting the Madonna and child, and the other two, episodes in the life of Christ, were installed: one to Emily Vaiden Herring, given by her daughter, Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins; one to Alice Herring Lynch, given by her sister, Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins; and one to Sallie Cowles (Herring) Hawkins, given by her daughters, Louise Hawkins Smith, Annice Hawkins Kenan, and Melanie Hawkins Tull.

Other gifts made over the years include, beside the altar cross in memory of Bishoop Green, the processional cross given in memory of Rhesa Read Hawkins and Elizabeth Vaiden Herring Hawkins, his wife,

by their niece, Louise Hawkins Smith, who also gave a new organ in memory of her sister, Melanie Hawkins Tull; a crimson, leather bound missal given by his family in memory of Frank Louis Hawkins; the brass missal stand given by the Sunday school in memory of Elizabeth Vaiden Herring Hawkins; a brass taper given by Mr. and Mrs. Roger Haydon; a bronze plaque in memory of Rhesa Read Hawkins and his wife, Elizabeth Vaiden Herring Hawkins, by the Braksdale family; a bronze plaque in memory of Louis Herring Hawkins by his daughter, Virginia Hawkins Bellenger; a bronze plaque in memory of Frank Louis Hawkins by his mother, Mrs. Louis Herring Hawkins; a set of altar hangings by the Seelbinder family of Memphis, Tennessee; a silver communion service, given in 1909, but the record of this, and other gifts, has been lost.

Each Christmas week, as dusk descends, the colorful memorial windows are lit from within to glorify the Nativity, and their beauty delights the eye and warms the heart of all who pass by – on foot, by car, or by train on that same “Central Road” that first brought the first Bishop Green to Vaiden.

In 1911, the year of its remodeling, St. Clement’s rector, the rev. D.T. Johnson, was Dean of the Convocation of Oxford. The parish proudly hosted the meeting of the clergy of that section of the state on October 31, November 1 and 2. A yellowed program shows that the Right Reverend Theodore DuBose Bratton, Bishop, assisted by the Reverend George Gordon Smeade, Archdeacon, led the three-day session of prayers, lectures on relevant subjects, and plans for the future.

The Rev. Malcolm W. Lockhart came as rector in 1912. A young man, he entered upon his work with enthusiasm, such enthusiasm that he once overstayed his time in Vaiden and missed the train to Winona, whereupon he walked the ten miles home so that he would not forget again! Receipts for that year were nearly \$900. Sunday school offerings were \$68.32; Women’s Auxiliary, \$56.10.

Bishop Bratton’s *Journal* entry of Sunday, December 8, 1912, says: “In the evening at St. Clement’s, Vaiden, Mr. Lockhart and I said the service; I confirmed one candidate, the oldest granddaughter of the Senior Warden, Mr. Rhesa Hawkins, my host. . .After visiting some of our people (Monday, 9<sup>th</sup>) I went to Winona in order to catch the fast train south.”

The Rev. T.W. Jones filled in after the Rev. Lockhart left in 1914, until July 15, 1915, when the Rev. Edward Albert DeMiller of Mobile, Alabama arrived – the same year Bishop Bratton accepted an invitation to preach in the world famous Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

The Rev. Mr. DeMiller was a young deacon just out of Seminary when he came to Vaiden, where he won a lasting place in the affection of his people. A year later, on July 9, 1916, St. Clement’s was given the privilege of serving as the church of his ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Bratton, who had been detained on the coast by a hurricane, commented: “A long distance message in the early morning notified me that the Rev. Messers Martin and McCrady were in Vaiden to take part in Mr. DeMiller’s Ordination. So, while I had the night before arranged to postpone the service until Wednesday, it seemed wise to proceed with the Ordination since a sufficient number of Presbyters were there. I took the 9 a.m. train and on arrival the Office was said. Mr. Martin preached the sermon, , Mr. McCrady presented the Holy Communion, Mr. DeMiller assisting. I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Rhesa Hawkins.”

Could this have been the Visit-of-the-Sweet-Potato-Rolls? Mrs. Hawkins, who set a bountiful table, always brought forth her best for the Bishop. On one occasion, sweet potato rolls were one feature for the breakfast that followed Family Prayer in

the library. Hot and buttered, they are delicious. As a plate piled with these delicacies made its way around the table the hostess took one only to learn to her great embarrassment that the Bishop had expectantly buttered that mound for his own enjoyment and consumption.

Mrs. Hawkins was well known for her fondness for cats. Her witty and devoted niece, Louise, once said of her that to stand ace-high in her good graces one had to be either an Episcopal minister or a cat.

In comparison to its size, St. Clement's has been liberal in its response to the needs of the diocese. In 1914, for example, its contribution for diocesan work outside the parish was \$164. Its first pledge to the Church Pension Fund, begun in 1917, was \$300.

The Rev. Edward DeMiller in 1916 organized the first vested choir. Mrs. Ethel McConnico Armstrong was soloist and leading soprano. The Rector himself sang bass. Friends in other denominations lent fine voices. Some names that now come to mind: Mrs. Minnie Esther Stubblefield, Presbyterian; Mrs. Walter Stuckey, Methodist; and Miss Lovie Wright, Baptist. These sang alto. Janie Hawkins was the organist. She was graciously replaced by Miss Lena Armstrong whenever she was called upon. Otherwise, "Miss Lena" (another Presbyterian and a splendid musician) also sang. Thus are the joys and blessings of Christendom shared in this small town.

A *Journal* entry of January 2, 1916, by Bishop Bratton, says that he "confirmed six children of St. Clement's." Having been a member of that class, the writer recalls the names of the other five: Mary Cain Hawkins, Virginia Hawkins, Charlotte Barksdale, Margaret McConnico and Mamie Rogers. In preparation for confirmation at St. Clement's, the Catechism was memorized verbatim – word for word and line by line, beginning with the first question, "What is your name?" and ending with acknowledgment of the requirement to "live in charity with all men." We were taught that nothing was to be placed on top of a Bible; that it was irreverent to speak of St. John as "John," of St. Luke as "Luke". . . The admonitions were many.

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At that time there were four Sunday school teachers: Mrs. S.E. McConnico, Mrs. John D. Hawkins, Mrs. Rhessa Read Hawkins and Miss Isabel Nye. Miss Nye, the town photographer, and sole Presbyterian in a family of staunch Episcopalians, surely earned for herself a crown in Heaven by instructing restless young Episcopalians in the way they should go. She dressed in rustling black taffeta, and beneath her ever-present veil she wore one pair of eye glasses while a second pair she clamped on top of it. After Sunday school, her duty done, "Miss Izzy" unfurled her goldheaded umbrella, gathered together her long, sweeping skirts and proceeded across the way to attend services at her own church.

Mrs. McConnico was especially loved because each Easter morning she came with a basket filled with glittering, golden eggs – not for her class alone, but one for every child. Each Easter Eve there was anxious speculation among the young concerning the certainty of this providence. There was always apprehension that she might not bring enough to go around, might even forget altogether! Of course, she never did, and year after year Mrs. McConnico's Easter gift in all its splendor stood out among the plainer, less glamorous, pink and purple eggs.

Sunday school: a synonym for super-finery, better than that reserved for birthday parties, for in those days, we appeared before the Lord in our best. Wreaths of silken rosebuds or blue forget-me-nots circled the crowns of broad-brimmed leghorn hats that bobbed above summer dresses of palest China silk; or of lace-trimmed batiste girdled with pastel satin sashes; or of white embroidered dotted Swiss with collars and cuffs of Irish crochet. Dainty silk parasols, hand-painted or ruffle-trimmed, were opened against the hot summer sun on the walk to and from the church.

The rosy cheeks of Henrice Armstrong, the youngest little girl, would be framed in the ruffles of an exquisite French bonnet of embroidered organdie and lace, her dress a confection of equal delicacy, handmade in a New Orleans convent.

In winter, tiny plumes adorned poke bonnets of garnet or sapphire-blue velvet with cloaks of the same material. Later, we wore little cape-and-muff sets of lamb's wool, or ermine, with snap purses embedded in the tops of the satin-lined muffs holding Sunday school nickels. There were woolen dresses of soft Scottish plaid; dresses of taffeta-trimmed serge in warm colors, with button-up shoes and uncomfortable, stiff-brimmed, beaver hats to match. One Christmas is remembered especially for the gift of a small, maroon prayer book bearing on its flyleaf the Biblical directive: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. . ." With it came a pair of little kid gloves in the same pretty color.

In summer, warm breezes stirring beneath the trees outside brought through the open windows the scent of honeysuckle. The drone of bees, the hum of voices, and the swish-swish of sandalwood fans could make young eyelids heavy.

In winter, a coal stove crackled and glowed.

And always the bell, swinging in its belfry, sent across town its no-nonsense summons to Sunday school and church. It rang out joyously for weddings. It tolled slowly, solemnly, sadly for the funerals of its leaders, one by one.

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## YEARS OF CHANGE

In the spring of 1917, Bishop Bratton, according to his *Journal* entry of March 4, was pleased by a "good congregation on this bitterly cold day here at St. Clement's where I said Evening Prayer and preached. Mrs. Louis Hawkins gave a special offering for the Bishop's Purse. I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Rhesa Read Hawkins."

After visiting this section of the diocese, he says, on March 17, that from Winona "I returned home as Dr. Barksdale's guest in the Club car. . . ."

On April 16, in Atlanta, in Atlanta, he "enjoyed luncheon with Mr. Frank Hawkins and a delightful company of friends at their club."

A few days later, on April 26, 1917, St. Clement's lost its treasurer and the Bishop a loyal friend in the death of Louis Herring Hawkins. On May 15, 1917, the opening day of the ninetieth annual diocesan council, meeting in St. Paul's Church, Columbus, Bishop Bratton appointed a committee to compose a tribute to his memory. The following memorial is incorporated in the report of that meeting.

"Louis Herring Hawkins  
1870 – 1917

*Louis Herring Hawkins, first son of Elizabeth Vaiden Herring and Rhesa Read Hawkins, was born in Vaiden, Mississippi May 18, 1870, was baptized by Bishop William Mercer Green November 16, 1870, and was confirmed by Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson December 20, 1885.*

*"Mr. Hawkins was twice married; first in November, 1902 to Miss Julia Greenfield Kaigler, to whom were born two children: Virginia Louise, and Julia Kaigler. His first wife died in December, 1905, and very soon thereafter his second daughter, Julia Kaigler, was also taken. In October, 1908, Mr. Hawkins was married to Miss Ruth Allen, and to them were born three sons: Ralph Williams, Frank, and Horace Allen, all of whom survive.*

*“On the morning of April 26, 1917, he was stricken with apoplexy, and lingering a few hours passed peacefully away before the close of that day. On the day following his body was tenderly laid away in the Vaiden cemetery, the services being conducted in his parish church by two of his former rectors: The Rev. Edward A. DeMiller and the Rev. E.S. Gunn, attended by a throng which far more than filled the church, of the citizens of Vaiden and other communities who came to pay their respects to the memory of a most dearly loved friend. Mr. Hawkins throughout his adult life was one of the leading merchants of his town, being a member of the mercantile firm of R.R. Hawkins & Sons. He was a member of St. Clement’s Church in which he ever took an enthusiastic interest, serving for many years as treasurer of the church, which position he held at the time of his death; and was frequently a delegate to the Councils of the Diocese.*

*“Always just in his dealing, courteous in his manner, and liberal in his views, he won the respect and esteem of all who knew him. Perhaps the most conspicuous characteristic of Mr. Hawkins was his devotion to his family and to his home. Here he found his chief delight and as a husband and father, was dearly loved.*

*“To his loved ones: father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children we devote a page of our journal for his memorial.*

E. Stirling Gunn  
Edward A. DeMiller  
N.T. Pegues  
Committee”

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Less than a year later, on March 17, 1918, death came for Rhesa Read Hawkins. In parochial reports he had been named Senior Warden as early as 1872, in which office he served forty-six continuous years. His obituary, published in the *Church News* of April, 1918, was written by the Rev. E. Stirling Gunn:

*“On Sunday night, March 17, a little past eight o’clock in his home in Vaiden, Mr. Rhesa Read Hawkins, in the seventy-third year of his life passed from the Church militant to the Church triumphant.*

*“In the death of this splendid man, Vaiden loses one of her most useful and leading citizens, the Church a most loyal and enthusiastic Senior Warden, and his family a wise, generous, and affectionate father.*

*“Mr. Hawkins was born in Granville Count, North Carolina, May 15, 1845, and in his early childhood came with his parents to Carroll County, Mississippi, where he was reared.*

*“At the beginning of the Civil War, when barely sixteen years of age, he volunteered his services to his country, and entered Company K, 11<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment. He was wounded at Sharpesburg after which he came home on a furlough; but soon regaining his strength, he rejoined his regiment, fighting*

*bravely up to the charge of Gettysburg, where he was taken prisoner until July, 1865 when with two companions he was the last to be released from the prison, having refused to take an objectionable oath.*

*“On July 27, 1869, Mr. Hawkins was married to Miss Elizabeth Vaiden Herring of Carroll County, and on January 1, 1870, they moved to Vaiden where Mr. Hawkins entered the firm of Vaiden Kepperel (sic) and Hawkins, which was a leading business house of the place, and since that time he has been a leading figure in the business of the town and county. In 1890, largely through his influence, the Vaiden Bank was organized, of which he was elected President, and this position he held until the day of his death.*

*“Mr. Hawkins was devoted to the Church, of which he was a liberal supporter, and for many years was a member of the Diocesan Council, acting in this capacity when our present Bishop was elected to the Diocese.*

*“The earnestness with which he transacted his business affairs was as manifest in his devotion to his Church; for he was always found in his family pew at the time of service, and during Lent he would close his store at the hour of worship, that his clerks might also attend the service.*

*“He was the soul of honor and integrity, and was recognized by his fellow citizens as so just and fair in his dealings, that many times he was appealed to by those who were at variance to settle their differences, always giving such just decisions that many cases were settled without appeal to the courts of the land.*

*“To Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins were born three children: Lewis (sic) Herring, John Davis, and Emily Mead, all of whom have families of their own living near the parental home in Vaiden. Less than a year ago Lewis (sic) Herring Hawkins preceded his father to the eternal home, but the other two survive. His daughters-in-law and son-in-law regarded him with deep affection and respect of an own beloved parent, and in turn they were to him well beloved children.*

*“Besides his immediate family Mr. Hawkins is survived by a brother, Mr. Frank Hawkins, of Atlanta, Georgia, and a sister, Mrs. J.C. Purnell of Winona. To these bereaved ones the deepest sympathy of the community is extended. Each individual who knew him has lost a friend, but the memory of his life so filled with kindly deeds will live forever as an inspiration and help to guide them into paths of better things.*

*“The beautiful floral offerings at his burial from friends distant and nearby, and the presence of many friends, including old-time servants of earlier days, spoke eloquently of the love freely given to this man of men. His body was tenderly laid to rest beneath the canopy of flowers*

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*in the cemetery at Vaiden, the services being conducted by two former devoted rectors, the Revs. E.A. Demiller and E.S. Gunn.*

*“May light perpetual shine upon him.*

*E.S. Gunn”*

The nation was at war, travel difficult and uncertain, but two weeks later, on April 2, Bishop Bratton wrote in his *Journal*: “Winona. Through the kindness of Mr. Caldwell, who drove me in his automobile, I was able to run down to see Mrs. Rhesa Hawkins and Mrs. Louis Hawkins, and other members of their family at Vaiden. . . I received today two gold pieces to be used ‘in memoriam.’”

The next parochial report from St. Clement’s showed 33 communicants and a Choir Guild of 17 members. It now showed S.E. McConnico as Senior Warden and Mrs. Rhesa R. Hawkins as Treasurer, Superintendent of the Sunday School and Clerk. But Mrs. Hawkins’ health was failing, and for the next two years, no report was sent to Council.

While recuperating at her daughter’s home (at that time in Greenwood, Mississippi) following a geart attack, Mrs. Hawkins descended the stairs one evening before dinner to find her son-in-law, Dr. Barksdale, and a friend of his engaged in a game of chess. Remarking that she had not observed that pastime since she was a girl, she asked permission to watch. Welcomed with warmth and deep affection, a chair was drawn close so that she might see well. After a long period of commendable quiet, she was unable to remain silent any longer; and leaning over the board she asked: “Now, which one is the bishop?”

As a matter of fact, the Bishop was the hard-pressed one. The Church had grown. Demands had increased with his years of loving service, and the election of an assistant was called for. Consequently, on May 29, 1919, in St. Andrew’s Church, Jackson, the Rev. William Mercer Green – namesake and grandson of Mississippi’s first Bishop – was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor. This made him fourth in the episcopate of the Diocese.

One of his first visits was to Vaiden. There, on July 12, 1919, he noted: “St. Clement’s. The Rev. DeMiller read prayer. I preached and confirmed three candidates. . .Mrs. Lewis (sic) Hawkins made an additional offering of \$5.00 to my Bishop Coadjutor’s Purse.” Though not named, the three confirmed at that time are known to have been Rhesa Read Hawkins II, Therese Hawkins Barksdale, and John Woodson Barksdale, Jr.

The parochial report reappeared, naming the Rev. George Vernon Harris rector as of January 1, 1920, and Mrs. John Davis Hawkins as superintendent of the Sunday school and clerk.

At that time, Janie Hawkins, organist, gathered together and trained an all-boy choir of twelve. It functioned for several years; and one visiting minister, taken by surprise and amazed at the quality of their singing, remarked that he had not known he was coming to a cathedral!

It is Bishop Bratton’s *Journal* that for February 22, 1920, reads: “Went to Vaiden I the afternoon, and at Evensong, said by Mr. Harris, I confirmed one person and preached to a large congregation. Offering \$9.40. Gifts to the Bishop’s Purse were made by Janie Hawkins, \$5.00; John Hawkins, \$5.00; Mrs. Burr Ramage, \$5.00; and a memorial from Mrs. Hawkins, \$10.00. I spent the (next) day writing and paying visits with Mr. Harris, and took tea with Janie Hawkins and her sister and brother.”

A few months later, on May 29, 1920, Elizabeth Vaiden Herring Hawkins died. As was still the custom then, a black-bordered funeral notice was printed for delivery by a long-time family servant to friends in town. When read today, such mementos recall the stringent formality and the decorum that dignified funeral services of years ago. In response to such a notice, friends filled to overflowing the church which Mrs. Hawkins had helped to found, the church she had loved, worked for and supported with her presence and her purse until her life’s end.

Following World War I, there was a bourgeoning of the national economy; cotton was selling at a dollar a pound. A population shift resulted, as individuals responded to the needs of businesses elsewhere. Members of St. Clement’s moved to Jackson, to Memphis, to Greenwood; and with their departures and the deaths of

others, the congregation grew smaller. Needs had to be fitted to this budget, and its budget had to be curtailed with the loss of each parishioner.

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In 1922, S.E. McConnico was Senior Warden, John Davis Hawkins was Junior Warden, Treasurer, and Superintendent of the Sunday School.

In 1923, the slate read: S.E. McConnico, Senior Warden; Hugh Butts, Junior Warden; John D. Hawkins, Treasurer and Clerk. The Sunday School Superintendent was Mrs. John D. Hawkins. The Rev. A.B. Caughey was the priest in charge. There were no changes in these positions for a number of years. Only the ministers came and went.

Bishop Bratton returned to Vaiden on June 17, 1926 to officiate at the large, formal evening wedding of Virginia Louise Hawkins and Paul Prevost Bellenger. St. Clement's vested choir led the processional, lending further beauty and solemnity to the impressive Episcopal marriage ceremony.

The Rev. J.T. Foster was appointed to serve in 1927, but the pulpit was listed as "Vacant" in 1928, the year St. Clement's lost the last of her original officers, her long-time Junior Warden who, ten years before his death, had served as Senior Warden. For fifty-six years Mr. McConnico had served as a leader in his church, and few indeed are those anywhere who can equal such a record of fidelity. When the bell tolled for the funeral of this Christian gentleman it tolled for the end of an era as well.

The Reverend Jones Hamilton, affectionately known as "Joney," came to serve the Winona field in 1929, and serving under him at St. Clement's were: John Davis Hawkins, Senior Warden; H.B. Caldwell, Junior Warden; Hugh Butts, Clerk; and Mrs. John Davis Hawkins continued as Superintendent of the Sunday school.

On Tuesday, April 16 of that year, Bishop Green noted: "St. Clement's, Vaiden. At 7:30 a.m. I celebrated the Holy Communion for the bridal party and the families. At 11 A.M. I solemnized the marriage of Gilbert Hay Hoffman and Miss Mary Cain Hawkins, in the presence of a large company of relatives and friends." Again the vested choir participated in another beautiful wedding in the church in which five generations of the bride's family have worshipped.

Until 1932, church officers remained the same with the exception of Will A. Avery, who became Junior Warden. The church was served by the Reverend J. Ord Cresap in 1934.

Appointed to succeed him was one who wrote affectionately of the five years he spent in this field.

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## VI

### THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Reverend Pipe Jones, presently at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sikeston, Missouri, served St. Clement's from 1935 to 1940.

His tenure covered a time of struggle everywhere, when many ex-college professors, with Ph.D. degrees, were glad to be operating elevators; when the artist, Reginald Marsh, was painting the murals in the Custom House of the city of New York for a salary of \$90 a month; when bacon was selling for twenty cents a pound and bread for five cents a loaf.

No one could have related more graphically than Mr. Jones the joys and challenges of those five years. Quoted here at length are his third-person account of his Vaiden ministry and his letter of October 24, 1972 to the honorable Clarence A. Pierce, Jr., treasurer of St. Clement's, and long-time State Legislator and able assistant to United States Senator James O. Eastland.

"I have a very pleasant memory of my years there," Mr. Jones says. "In terms of present day standards one may think that I had a difficult time, but indeed this isn't so. I never wanted for a thing, and none of my years have been happier. You have a wonderful group of people in Vaiden, and I envy you for being their representative.

"Please let me know more about the Centennial. I would like to be present. I pass through many times; but for lack of known friends, I just look around, breathe the wonderful air, and pass on. May God continue to bless you."

The Rev. Pipe Jones was appointed to serve St. Clement's Episcopal Church by the Rt. Rev. Theodore DuBose Bratton on January 1, 1935.

The Rev. Mr. Jones graduated from the Virginia Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia, June 10, 1934. "The Great Depression had been in full swing for at least four years," he says, "leaving the Diocese and all of its churches without funds. Hence, no appointments were made in June, so Mr. Jones remained at the Seminary doing graduate work. However, by December, Bishop Bratton got commitments from four churches which made up what was called 'The Winona Field'. The Field consisted of Winona, Carrollton, Vaiden and West. Each community had a small congregation and a Church building. None had Parish Halls. Agreement was made to furnish Mr. Jones a house in Winona with a stipend of eighty dollars per month – West giving five, Vaiden and Carrollton fifteen each, and Winona the balance. He (the Rev. Mr. Jones) would furnish his own transportation and assume all utilities. There would be no fringe benefits except for the payment toward a pension. The Diocese was unable to give anything at the time. The work would be under the direction of the Coadjutor, Will Mercer Green.

"The Mission Field apparently had no choice in selecting a Priest. Bishop Bratton made the appointment and provided fifty dollars to move the Jones family from Alexandria. He reported for work February 1, 1935. They remained as guests of Mrs. E.P. Cameron and Miss Jennie Purnell until some furniture could be obtained to furnish the large rectory. The only cooking stove was a two-eye water heater which they used until the birth of their second child, Winifred. John Ackland, the oldest, was born while Mr. Jones was in the Seminary. Two other children, William Hartley and Eugenia Lewis were also born at Winona.

"Services were held at Winona and Carrollton on one Sunday, and Vaiden and West the following Sunday. However, as time passed, services were held at all four places each Sunday though the worship hours were unsatisfactory to most worshippers. During Lent, each congregation had a night, and on that day a call was made on each member of the congregation. Mr. Jones promised to remain five years if they would pledge their best support. . .

"Each congregation in the field was well organized. A Vestry with the wardens and officers, a Women's Auxiliary, and a Sunday school. Scout organizations were sponsored both at Winona and Vaiden. All had active Altar Guilds, and not one time in the five years did a single Guild fail to prepare the Altar, though on several occasions the Rector forgot to bring the bread and wine! On one such occasion, a Guild member went home and produced a slice of bread; and after the service, it was revealed that we had made use of apple brandy for the want of wine! Indeed,

Those were happy days!

“St. Clement’s had a seven-member choir and they rehearsed regularly; and when the Priest would pull up to the door of the Church in his muddy Model-A, the bell would sound music equal to that anywhere in the world. Fully vested, we would process, and the entire service would be sung. Mrs. Ethel Armstrong, sister of Sam McConnico, Jr., the Senior Warden, had an excellent voice, and many visitors came when she would sing such favorites as ‘The Psalms,’ or other well selected numbers, especially at Christmastime and Easter. The Church would always be highly decorated and the Altar would be well groomed with flowers.

“Quite a number were baptized and confirmed in those days. Our records will show them. One big occasion was the formal wedding of Alma Jean Butts to John E. Aldridge. It was a large wedding, and again the choir sang all of the traditional music. A number of sad funerals were held from the Church – the Haekins, the Armstrongs, Mrs. McConnico, and a number of others.

“When the physical property began to show wear, Mr. Jones borrowed ladders and painted the woodwork himself. He also enlarged the sacristy. When a new roof was needed, the Priest wrote a former member of the Parish, Mr. Frank Hawkins, one of the pioneer developers of the Coca-Cola industry of Atlanta, Georgia. He provided the roof and had it installed. . .

“One year, we had a community Thanksgiving Service at the Church; and the day before, Mr. Jones was to come down and assist with the house-cleaning. His wife was ill at the time, so he brought with him his young son – about three. On his way home, the child fell from the car, fractured his skull; but after many weeks of care, he fully recovered.

“A Boy Scout Troop was organized and the Rector served as Scout Master. On one occasion he hiked his troop to Winona, and with a hard rain, all the boys were put to bed at the Rectory. Easter Egg hunts were held at the McConnicos’, and Parish Dinners were held at the home of Mrs. Ruth Hawkins. She would also entertain the Sunday School with gala parties.

“There was a crisis in one family. The stove mill shut down, leaving the head of the family unemployed. Since he lived in a rented home, there was nothing (with which) to buy food, Mr. Jones went among the members and received enough money to pay the back rent and to purchase a good supply of groceries.

“He was driven to several towns where the stove mills were yet in operation, and after a job was located in Water Valley, the Rector placed the family in his car, hitched all their belongings in a trailer, and took them to Water Valley. On another occasion, a young man met Mr. Jones as he was going into Church for a service. The man needed a minister to bury his father. Upon calling at the remote home, the Rector found that no funeral director had been summoned, and no provision had been made for a death certificate – the body was there, and it had been there for many hours. A medical doctor was summoned, a funeral director gave his service, and Mr. Jones and the young man made the casket from well seasoned cypress planks which a lumber yard in Winona generously gave. The body was interred in the family plot near the home in which the death occurred.

“There are many other stories that could be told by this writer, but none would surpass the memory of the deep devotion and the consecration of its members. They were a wonderful family of God. I congratulate them on their one hundredth birthday, and I pray that they will enjoy many more centennials to come.”

The sudden death of John Davis Hawkins on August 19, 1935, left the office of senior warden vacant. This was filled by S.E. McConnico, Jr.

At the same time, Mrs. H.B. Caldwell, Sr., the organist, became superintendent of the Sunday school as well, succeeding Mrs. John Davis Hawkins, who died two years later.

In 1938, Bishop Bratton retired, and Bishop Green became the head of the diocese.

In 1939, the parochial report showed Senior Warden, H.B. Caldwell; Clerk, Ralph Hawkins; Treasurer, John D. Hawkins, Jr.; and Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. H.B. Caldwell. In 1940, the wardens were H.B. Caldwell and Frank Hawkins; Clerk, Ralph Hawkins; Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. H.B. Caldwell. On February 26 of that year, Bishop Green wrote: "St. Clement's, Vaiden (The Rev. Mr. W.P. Jones and I) had supper with Mr. and Mrs. Sam McConnico. Mr. Jones read Evening Prayer and I preached. I was glad to meet many old friends of our own and sister communicants."

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In 1941, the Rev. C.S. Liles was priest in charge. On Wednesday, March 26 of that year, Bishop Green held services at Christ Church, Little Rock, Arkansas. Of that visit he said: "I had supper with our good Mississippians, Mr. and Mrs. Rhesa Hawkins and John D., Jr." (They were visitors at these services, as the Hawkins' memberships were at Trinity Cathedral, Little Rock.)

Bishop Green visited his Vaiden friends for the last time on March 15, 1942. Of that visit he wrote: "Mr. Liles read Evening Prayer and I preached to a good congregation, many of our Christian Brethren being present. We had supper with Mrs. Ruth Hawkins."

On November 12 of that same year, Bishop Green died suddenly in Columbus, Mississippi. Much beloved by his diocese, and by St. Clement's especially, his death brought sadness to its members; but deeper, more personal sorrows awaited the congregation.

Once again the country was at war. Going to its defense was Frank Louis Hawkins, warden of St. Clement's and principal of the Vaiden High School. He had disclosed to Bishop Green his desire to return to Sewanee and study for the priesthood, and had been offered the use of the Bishop's lodge there. But this was not to be. Sent by the Army to Australia, he became fatally ill, dying on October 22, 1943, aboard the ship bringing him home for treatment. In diocesan records for that year, on the page headed "In Memoriam," we find listed the name: "Mr. Frank Hawkins, St. Clement's, Vaiden."

Nor was he the parish's only war casualty. Thomas Henry Armstrong, III, two years later, in 1945, also died while serving his country. The loss of these two splendid young men was of great magnitude to a congregation as small and as intimate as that of St. Clement's.

Elected to succeed Bishop Green was the Reverend Duncan Montgomery Gray, consecrated the fifth Bishop of Mississippi in St. Andrew's Church, Jackson, on May 12, 1943. of his first visit to Vaiden, on November 1, 1943, he said, "En route home from Como I called upon Mrs. Ruth Hawkins at Vaiden who has received word of the death of her son, Frank Hawkins, in the service. The Bishop and the Diocese claim a share in the sorrow of the bereaved mother and wife."

The death of Bishop Bratton on June 26, 1944 was deeply mourned throughout the diocese. Bishop Gray was alone, now, in the office, but he shouldered his responsibilities ably, smoothly carrying forward the work of the Church. He received the support of friends, mentioning in his *Journal* that on September 15, 1943, he was the "guest of Dr. Barksdale at a luncheon given for a group of friends at the Heidelberg Hotel in Jackson."

In 1945, S.E. McConnico, Jr., warden of St. Clement's, died. He was the same age as the church, having been born in 1876, the year it was built.

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## VII

### ST. CLEMENT'S TODAY

Bishop Gray's next visit was on January 13, 1946. "11 a.m., St. Clement's, Vaiden: I celebrated Holy Communion and preached. Purse offering \$26.00. The Methodist and Presbyterian congregations graciously joined us in this service. With a group of congenial friends enjoyed lunch at the home of Mrs. Ruth Hawkins."

Parochial reports for this period are very brief. In 1946, Mrs. Ruth Hawkins was treasurer; in 1947, her son, Horace Hawkins, filled that position. No other officers were mentioned. The church was still served by the Rev. Mr. Liles, minister at Grenada.

Early the next year, members and friends of St. Clement's read with interest that on January 6, 1948, in Norfolk, Virginia, Bishop Gray, in his deep and resonant voice, read the Epistle at the consecration of the Rev. George Purnell Gunn as Bishop Coadjutor of Southern Virginia. Bishop Gunn's wife was Frances Hawkins Purnell, who, also, had been born in Winona.

There were no changes in St. Clement's reports until 1950, when Horace Hawkins was listed as Warden and Mrs. Ruth Hawkins as Treasurer.

Then, in the spring of 1951, a heartening story appeared in the *Church News*:

"The congregation of St. Clement's Church, Vaiden, during the past year has taken a new lease on life and is becoming an active group in the Diocese. The story is probably best told in the words of Mrs. H.B. Caldwell, Secretary-Treasurer of the church.

" 'On March 1, 1951, the members of the church met in our home to reorganize and get things on a working basis. Some of us had recently returned to Vaiden after living elsewhere for several years. We were quite anxious to keep the church open.

" 'We spent a pleasant evening discussing our needs. Each made a small pledge, and we went to work to get things done. We had only eleven members at this time, with one of them away.

" 'Our old organ had given out. That was one of our first major considerations, as good music is so essential to a beautiful service. Mrs. William A. Smith of Atlanta, Ga., the former Louise Hawkins, whose ancestors were instrumental in the building of our church, learned our plans and generously gave us a new electric organ. The first thing we did was to have the lights connected and special wiring installed for the organ.

" 'We met our obligations for 1951 and had a small balance left on hand.

" 'The Rev. Robert G. Donaldson of Canton has one service here a month, as we have a small mission.

" 'In February 1952, we had an infant baptism – John Marx Shands. On March 11<sup>th</sup> we had six new members confirmed: Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Shands, Mr. and Mrs. William Elbrecht, Frances Campbell Jordan and Dewitt C. Jordan.

" 'We now have eighteen members, with five small children. We have Sunday school regularly each Sunday morning. Mr. and Mrs. R.H. Haydon have moved here to make their home.

" 'During 1952 we have installed butane gas, bought new Hymnals and cottas, and at this time are painting the tower and exterior woodwork of the church.

“ ‘With God’s help we will be able to carry on and continue until all necessary repairs are completed and our church is a place of beauty and service for the glory of God. We hope next to repaint the inside of the church, to get a new cross, and place a marker on the outside of the church to identify it, as we are on Highway 51.’

“(The Church school is credited with \$28.85 as its Children’s Lenten Offering this year, and the congregation has paid its assessment and missionary quota in full. – Ed.)”

Following is a letter from Bishop Gray, dated April 13, 1951:

*“Mr. John D. Hawkins, Jr., Warden  
Mr. H.B. Caldwell, Sr., Vestry  
Mr. T.C. Vaiden, Vestry  
Mr. Clarence Pierce, Vestry*

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*Mrs. H.B. Caldwell, Secretary and Treasurer  
St. Clement’s Episcopal Church  
Vaiden, Mississippi*

*My dear friends:*

*It is my pleasure to appoint you to the office indicated for the year 1951 and hope you will embrace this opportunity for further service to the Church.*

*With good wishes for you and thanking you, as always, for your devoted service to the Church, I am, as ever,*

*Faithfully yours,  
(S)  
Duncan M. Gray  
Bishop*

*DMG/hnc”*

The above slate of officers remained unchanged through 1954. In that year the Rev. Michael T. Engle ministered to the spiritual needs of St. Clement’s, and on October 11 the Bishop visited there, commenting that he read Morning Prayer and preached. The offering for his purse was \$25.00. He was “the luncheon guest of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Haydon at their country home.”

In 1955, Thomas Clifford Vaiden, Vestryman, died. The Rev. Roy C. Bascom was the minister for that year and the next two years. After him came the Rev. Wofford K. Smith, and in the same year, 1958, Clarence A. Pierce became Treasurer, which position he has continued to hold to the present day.

H.B. Caldwell, Sr., a Vestryman who had filled more than one office in the church, died in 1960.

Again, death had made great inroads, and in 1961 St. Clement’s presented a formal petition to the Council asking that its status be reduced from that of a Parish Church to that of a Mission. The petition was granted. This change was effected with the help of the Reverend Reynolds Cheney, Jr., and that same year the Reverend John Maury Allin was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor of Mississippi.

Bishop Allin’s first visit to Vaiden was made January 22, 1962: “In St. Clement’s Church. . . I celebrated the Holy Communion and preached. With the Rev. Cheney I made several calls on members of the congregation.”

More and more Bishop Allin assumed the duties of the office as Bishop Gray's health declined. On June 25, 1966, Bishop Gray died, having earned the unselfish expenditure of himself the love and respect of a grateful diocese.

A year later, on July 15, 1967, St. Clement's lost another devoted member in the death of Ruth Allen (Mrs. Louis H.) Hawkins.

No parochial reports from St. Clement's have appeared in the *Journal* since 1968. For several years now, this post has been listed as "Vacant," though ministers from neighboring Episcopal churches hold services there at various times throughout the year, and Bishop Allin continued to visit it.

He also kept in touch through Clarence Pierce, its treasurer, seeing him as he went about the business of the diocese elsewhere. In Washington, D.C., August 15-19, 1967, Bishop Allin noted: "Church Executive Development Program continues. During free time enjoyed a tour of the capitol with Clarence Pierce of Vaiden as my guide."

Again, on August 24, he says: "I was introduced to the Chaplain (of the) House of Representatives. . . then introduced to the House by the Speaker, Mr. McCormick of Massachusetts, and it was my privilege to offer the prayer opening the session." He added that, in company with Clarence Pierce, he had lunched with other dignitaries.

The Bishop again visited Vaiden on December 31, 1967. "On to St. Clement's, for Evening Prayer – the deacons reading the office – and another sermon by me. With Clarence Pierce, we all had supper with Mr. and Mrs. Dell Shivel, then I drove on to Jackson."

"March 9, 1968. Leaving Kosciusko, I drove to Vaiden. Deacons Agnew and Bell again joined me there. With Clarence Pierce and Mrs. Shivel we read Morning Prayer in St. Clement's and then inspected the building."

"October 3, 1970. A great football day. Thanks to the kindness of good friend

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Clarence Pierce of Vaiden, John and I watched State win, and Ann and I enjoyed excellent seats while Ole Miss won over some school from Alabama."

On October 4, 1973, at the Triennial Convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, Bishop John Maury Allin was chosen to fill the office of Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, succeeding Presiding Bishop John E. Hines. St. Clement's, like the rest of the Diocese, rejoiced in the great honor and national recognition given her Bishop, but relinquished him with a sense of loss to the highest Church office in the land.

To succeed Bishop Allin, the Reverend Duncan Montgomery Gray, Jr., on March 9, 1974, in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson, was elected Bishop Coadjutor. He thus became number seven in the episcopate of Mississippi, where his father, as fifth in that distinguished line, had preceded him.

And thus it is, as this story of a hundred years of hopes and dreams and courage and faith is ended. St. Clement's has been passed down from generation, into the hands of its present congregation:

Mrs. Will A. Avery

Mrs. C.H. Butt

Mrs. H.B. Caldwell, Jr.

John Davis Hawkins

Dewitt Jordan, Jr.

James Jordan

Harvey B. Caldwell, III  
Neely Caldwell  
David Caldwell

Clarence A. Pierce, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Dell Shivel  
Mrs. T.A. Wiltshire

St. Clement's, and many, many others like it throughout the land, have helped to weave the strong fabric of the Church that now extends "from sea to shining sea."

"They have been its feeders," someone rightly stated.

The Reverend M.L. Agnew expressed it well when he said, "St. Clement's created waves."

And so it did. It sent those it nurtured spiritually and well out into the four corners of the earth to become faithful members of the Altar Guilds; to sing in city choirs; to teach in countless Sunday schools; to serve well their communities; to "give as they are able."

Rhesa Read Hawkins, II, went on to become a valued vestryman and the treasurer of Trinity Cathedral, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Horace Allen Hawkins, who moved to Lexington, Mississippi, served repeatedly as a vestryman of St. Mary's Episcopal Church there until his death in 1965.

Henry Edward Barksdale served many times over as a vestryman of St. Andrew's Church, Jackson, Mississippi, before his death in 1971.

Battle Malone Barksdale has been a vestryman of St. James' Church, Jackson, Mississippi, and the larger perspective, he is at present Chairman of the Board of St. Mark's Educational and Day Care Center, in Jackson.

John Woodson Barksdale, Jr., first served St. James' Church, Jackson, Mississippi, as a vestryman, later becoming its Senior Warden. He was appointed by Bishop Gray to the Diocesan Executive Committee, and served as a member of the Standing Committee, as a member of the Diocesan Committee of Finance, and as a Trustee of All Saints' Episcopal School, in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In 1961, he was sent as a delegate from the Diocese to the Triennial Convention in Detroit, Michigan. He died in 1971.

During the period of their lives, these three Barksdale brothers were serving simultaneously on the vestries of their respective churches.

A member of the fifth generation, Thomas Gaddis Barksdale, was elected a vestryman of the Church of the Incarnation, in Dallas, Texas.

IN bringing this story to a close, we acknowledge that danger lies in excessive veneration of the past. But it is in gratitude that we have looked backward, and in thanksgiving that we have summoned up a sweet remembrance of things past, hoping that in so doing we will encounter that early vision made manifest in St. Clement's, and be led by it into a life of new resolve.

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*And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy Servants  
departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching the to  
grant them continual growth in thy love and service, and to  
give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them  
we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.*

-- Book of Common Prayer --